

REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the Office Action mailed October 7, 2003. Claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 23 to 26 were pending in the application. Claims 3, 9, 11 and 23 have been amended. Therefore claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 23 to 26 are now pending in the application and are submitted for reconsideration.

Amendments to the Disclosure:

As discussed with the Examiner Ms Olga Hernandez by telephone on February 6, 2004, the description has been amended to conform to US requirements and to correspond more clearly with the claims. In particular, paragraph numbering has been added and appropriate subheadings have been added. It is believed that the present specification clearly defines that which applicant presently believes to be the invention.

Additional amendments to the specification have been made to conform to U.S. practice, to correct grammatical errors, and to more accurately reflect the scope of the disclosed invention. No new matter has been added. Support for the amendments is based on the text of the specification, the drawings and the claims as originally filed.

Voluntary Amendments to the Claims:

Claim 9 has been amended to correct the dependency from a cancelled base claim.

Claims 3, 11 and 23 have been amended to more clearly define the scope of the present claims. Basis for this amendment is to be found e.g. in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the original description.

Rejection of Claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 23 to 26:

Claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 23 to 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to disclose the best mode.

Claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 23 to 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by applicant's disclosure.

As discussed during the telephone interview with the Examiner, the rejection under section 112 appears to be made on the basis that the person skilled in the art is unable to understand the invention and that there is thus concealment of the best mode. This in turn is

based on the contention that the disclosure does not contain any subject matter disclosed in the claims.

In response to this objection, and as discussed with the Examiner during the telephone interview, the description has been amended to more closely correspond to the subject matter of the claims and more accurately point out what is the invention. In particular the subheading "Brief Summary of the Invention" has been added and a clear summary of what applicant presently believes to be the invention included in this section.

Additionally, applicants submit that there has been no concealment of the best mode as known to the applicants at the date of filing of the present application. To the extent a best mode was known to applicants at that time, this has been included in the specification. No evidence of concealment has been provided to support the best mode rejection and applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Furthermore, applicant believes that the invention is adequately disclosed to the person skilled in the relevant field. The skilled person in the field of rail vehicles presented with the disclosure according to the present application would be aware of how to apply an appropriate algorithm to achieve the desired optimization.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), applicant has amended the description to clearly point out that general algorithms for optimization problems are known from the prior art. In agreement with the Examiner, reference to such algorithms has been removed from the statement of the invention and detailed description. Applicant thanks the Examiner for her help and cooperation in arriving at such amendments.

As indicated in a previous communication with the Examiner, the present invention takes advantage of the presence of "time reserves" within the existing schedules to improve efficiency. This has become extremely important within the rail industry. Previously train operators were not charged for the actual energy consumed by their vehicle, calculations being made only on a network basis and attributed to the train operators according to line usage. It has been found, that by optimizing the driving mode, energy savings of up to 50% can be made for the same vehicle on the same journey compared to existing driving modes.

Prior wisdom was based on the assumption that coasting was the most efficient form of travel. It was also generally assumed that the tractive force power loss relationship was substantially linear. This is not the case; in fact in modern vehicles with regenerative braking, the characteristic is generally parabolic and symmetrical whereby power loss increases with the square of the tractive force as shown in the drawings. According to claim 1 and claim 11, by determining and then maximising the overall efficiency within the constraints of the

vehicle characteristics and the journey parameters, full benefit can be derived from the differences between actual characteristics and the idealized characteristics previously assumed.

Applicants respectfully submit that nothing in the art of record teaches or suggests the present invention. In particular, the determination of the operating point characteristic of the vehicle and the optimization thereof have not been disclosed or suggested.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 23 to 26.

Any extension of time that may be deemed necessary to further the prosecution of this application is hereby requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 08-3038, referencing the docket number shown above.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the number given below in order to resolve any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



David P. Owen
Reg. No. 43,344

Date: 9 Feb 2004

Customer No. 32894
Howrey Simon Arnold & White
CityPoint, One Ropemaker Street,
London EC2Y 9HS
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: 011 44 20 7628 3303

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METHOD FOR POWER OPTIMIZATION IN A VEHICLE /TRAIN HAVING AN
EFFICIENCY THAT DEPENDS ON THE OPERATING POINT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention Description

[0001] The invention relates to a method for power optimization in a vehicle/train ~~according to the preamble of claim 1 using time reserves which are included when planning a schedule for travel over a route.~~

2. Description of the Related Art

[0002] During the planning of journeys and the drafting of schedules for rail traffic, time reserves for unforeseen events and adverse operating conditions are included in the plans. Since, during real journeys, the operating conditions are typically more favorable than those assumed during planning, the time reserves created by this are available for other purposes. A particularly practical use of the time reserves resides in the saving of power by means of a suitable travel mode.

[0003] Previously known and used methods for power minimization are mostly based on the assumption that a travel mode comprising the constituents maximum acceleration – travel at constant speed – coasting – maximum retardation is optimum in power terms. In this case, the mechanical tractive power which is needed to accelerate the vehicle is minimized. For verification, a linear dynamic train model is used, in particular no account being taken of any term which describes the quadratic relationship between speed and travel resistance.

[0004] In DD 255 132 A1, this basic assumption is expanded by subdividing a total route into a number of sections, so that in each section the slope resistance of the route is constant.

[0005] In EP 0 467 377 B1, the subdivision of the overall route into a number of sections is introduced in such a way that in each section the permissible maximum speed is constant. The travel mode comprising the constituents maximum acceleration – travel at constant speed – maximum retardation is repeated in each section. Coasting is therefore dispensed with.

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- [0006] EP 0 755 840 A1 does not describe a practical method for power optimization but instead explains a general system structure with which power optimization can also be implemented. A cycle comprising acceleration – travel at constant speed – retardation and braking is listed as an example.
- [0007] Optimization algorithms for optimizing a function of multiple variables are known. A number of optimization algorithms are shown, for example, in a book by Papageorgiou: Optimierung [Optimization], Chapters 10, 19 and in particular 20, Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

- [0008] The invention is based on the object of specifying an improved method for power optimization with regard to the time reserves included in the planning of a schedule of a vehicle/train during at least a portion of a trip.
- [0009] This object is achieved, in conjunction with the preamble, by: determining time available for the portion of the trip; identifying a function to determine efficiency for the vehicle as a function of an operating point of the vehicle; and calculating a travel mode for the portion of the trip, wherein the function is used to calculate the travel mode to minimize power required by the vehicle to travel over the portion of the trip in the time available, the feature specified in claim 1.
- [0010] The advantage which can be achieved by the invention is in particular that, by taking into account the dependence of the vehicle efficiency on the operating point in the optimization algorithm, instead of the mechanical tractive power, it is the power primarily used, such as the electrical power in electric rail vehicles, which is minimized.
- [0011] An advantageous refinement of the invention is identified in the subclaim. According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, the efficiency for the vehicle is determined as a function of tractive force and/or vehicle speed and/or temperature.

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- [0012] According to an alternative preferred embodiment, each portion is defined as having a maximum speed; and the travel mode is calculated so that the vehicle does not exceed the maximum speed.
- [0013] According to a further aspect of the invention, a method for the energy optimization of a vehicle is disclosed, which makes use of time reserves included when planning a timetable. The method comprises: determining a multi-dimensional characteristic diagram of a vehicle operating point dependency of power loss on at least tractive force and vehicle speed; dividing the journey route into several sections each defined by a constant maximum speed; and minimizing an input energy to the vehicle with the help of an optimization algorithm to achieve an energy-saving driving mode, whereby the operating point dependency of the power loss is taken into account in such a way that within a section, the tractive force is varied as a function of the speed.
- [0014] Further advantages of the proposed method emerge from the following description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0015] The invention will be explained in more detail below using the exemplary embodiments illustrated in the drawing, in which:
- [0016] Figs. 1, 2 show characteristic maps of the power loss of typical electric locomotives
- [0017] Fig. 3 shows an exemplary speed plot at an assumed constant vehicle efficiency and maximum speed, and
- [0018] Fig. 4 shows an exemplary optimum speed plot taking into account the dependence of the vehicle efficiency on the operating point, and maximum speed.

DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

- [0019] The vehicle efficiency is the ratio between the tractive power provided – the output power – and the input power needed for this, in particular the electric power, which is drawn by an electric locomotive via a pantograph. The difference between the input power and the output power is the power loss of the vehicle.

[0020] The invention provides for the dependence of the efficiency on the operating point to be included in the power optimization or for power optimization with regard to the time reserves included in the planning of a schedule of a vehicle/train, since a calculation with an assumed constant efficiency represents only a poor approximation to the actual optimum. In this case, the problem of power minimization is formulated as a mathematical optimization problem and is solved by applying a suitable, generally known optimization algorithm to the variables defining the operating point.

[0021] Optimization algorithms which are suitable for the proposed method are known, for example, from Papageorgiou: Optimierung [Optimization], Chapters 10, 19 and in particular 20, Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996.

[0022] The dependence of the efficiency on the operating point can be taken into account via a function of the efficiency or the power loss as a function of important influencing variables, such as in particular the tractive force and/or speed and/or temperature. For this purpose, Figures 1 and 2 show characteristic maps of the power loss of typical electric locomotives. Such a three-dimensional characteristic map of the power loss as a function of the tractive force and the speed is a typical option for representing the dependence of the efficiency on the operating point.

[0023] Fig. 3 shows, as a traveling diagram, an exemplary distance/speed plot -- see the continuous curve -- for a vehicle traveling over a route. The route is divided into portions or sections with an assumed constant vehicle efficiency and maximum speed in the individual route sections -- see the dashed curve. The travel mode illustrated is composed of the known constituents, these being used repeatedly in each subsection with constant speed limitation. These known constituents are essentially maximum acceleration, coasting and braking in the first section, followed by "travel at constant speed" in the slow-travel section, followed by maximum acceleration and the change between coasting and braking to a standstill.

[0024] Fig. 4 shows, in comparison with this, as a travel diagram (and determined in accordance with the characteristic map according to Fig. 1) an exemplary optimum speed plot -- see continuous curve -- taking into account the dependence of the vehicle efficiency on the operating point and maximum speed -- see the dashed curve. The

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optimum travel mode illustrated differs considerably from travel modes which can be determined with previously known methods (see Fig. 3). In particular, in the exemplary embodiment illustrated, use is made of reduced acceleration, which merges smoothly into the braking.

[0025] Many modifications in addition to those described above may be made to the techniques described herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, although specific embodiments have been described, these are examples only and are not limiting upon the scope of the invention.